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A  
S E R M O N

Preached at  
CROUCHED FRIARS, LONDON,  
APRIL the 18th, 1762.

On Occasion of the  
D E A T H  
O F  
GEORGE BENSON, D.D.

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[ Price Six-Pence. ]

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S E R I E S

in bedrock.



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H T A E D

GEORGE B. BROWN, JR.

1950

*The CHARACTER and REWARD of the  
Good and Faithful SERVANT.*

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On Occasion of the  
D E A T H  
O F  
GEORGE BENSON, D.D.

Who died *April* the 6th, 1762.  
In the Sixty-third Year of his Age.

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By EDWARD PICKARD. *K*

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To which is added,  
The ORATION at the INTERMENT.  
By E. RADCLIFF.

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MATTHEW XXV. 21.

*Well done, thou good, and faithful servant :  
thou hast been faithful over a few things ; I  
will make thee ruler over many things : enter  
thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

THESE words are part of a parable, by which our Divine Master, agreeable to his usual custom, taught and instructed his hearers. Under the emblem of a man, travelling into a far country ; calling his servants together ; delivering to each of them, in a wise proportion, his goods, with a view to their improvement of them ; at length returning ; calling these servants to an account ; applauding the diligent and faithful, and rewarding them according to their improvement ; but reproofing and punishing one who had been negligent and slothful : Under this emblem, I say, our Lord, in a familiar, but very engaging, manner, represents to us

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all,

all, our present condition, and our future expectations; the connection between our present character and conduct, and our final happiness and misery. He teacheth us, (and he that hath ears to hear, let him hear) that we are all of us servants of the great God; and have various talents committed to us; some more than others; and different in kind and degree; distributed at the pleasure of our great Lord; but with a wise impartiality; and to each one sufficient, with a faithful improvement, to his own happiness. We are further taught, that however things pass on for a while, and we may seem to be left to ourselves unnoticed by our supreme Lord, yet an exact account is taken; and a day of solemn and impartial reckoning will come. When the good and faithful servant shall be honoured and rewarded, in proportion to his improvement, and to his diligence and fidelity: while he, who has neglected or abused the opportunity and ability for usefulness and service which God has given him, shall be treated with shame; his attempts to excuse and justify himself shall turn to his own reproach; and the punishment be allotted to him, which his sloth, negligence, and unfaithfulness, deserves.

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This is the general view and intention of the parable. From which we may learn these very important lessons, *viz.* That the great Governor and Judge of all, is righteous and just in his present distributions; and in his final decisions. And that our wisdom and duty is, to consider the present life as connected with another: and to live under the firm and governing persuasion of an awful and righteous judgment.

The words of our text represent to us the good and faithful servant, as honoured and rewarded by his lord. *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, &c.* And they lead us to consider the final honour and happiness of all those, who are faithful to the trust which God has committed to them; diligent in the work and service which he hath called them out to.

I propose in this discourse,

- I. To describe to you the character of the *good and faithful servant*. And,
- II. To represent to you the honour and reward annexed hereto.



After which I shall endeavour to apply the subject to the present sorrowful occasion. A service, to which I feel myself unequal : which I would gladly have declined : but which, as I am called to it, I shall discharge with honesty and fidelity : and hope for your prayers and candour.

I. I am to describe to you the good and faithful servant.

And it will be sufficient just to observe, what I suppose none will dispute, that we are all the servants of God. Such we are by the most plain, sacred, and indispensable obligations. For our existence itself, we are indebted to him. Our capacities, our advantages, whether ingrafted in nature, or super-added by peculiar grace, are all the gifts of his indulgent bounty. The continuance of our lives and enjoyments for a single moment, depends intirely upon his pleasure and care. The rank which we hold amongst the creatures of God, the stations of life in which we are placed, the part which we are to act upon this great stage, are the sovereign and wise appointment of the great Master and Lord of all. Whether then we are the servants of  
God

God or no, cannot be made a question. It is next to self-evident, that we are.

And if servants, then are we accountable to him. And either the Supreme Being will neglect his own design, give up his own character, and disregard the work of his hands; or, he will call us to an account. And these reasonings, which nature itself leads us to, the word of God establisheth and strengtheneth. It is a view of ourselves and of human life, most honourable and important: which we ought very carefully to attend to. I am a servant of God; and accountable to him.

Ask you, now, what this character implies in it? What is the service which God requires of us? Let your reflections upon the wisdom of God in all his works, let conscience, let the declarations of the sacred oracles, answer the inquiry. These will all tell us (and they speak to our hearts, as well as to our reason) that the great design of our Maker and Lord is, that we should know, admire, praise, love, and imitate him, the great source and original of light, perfection, and happiness. That we should live in obedience to his laws, by what-

ever way made known to us. That we should thankfully receive, and improve to his honour, the various advantages he has by nature, providence, or revelation, graciously conferred upon us. That we should firmly trust, in all things, and at all times, to his all-disposing providence ; and acquiesce in, and submit to, his wise and sovereign will.

That, with respect to others, we improve every kind and benevolent affection : cultivate universal love and charity : faithfully and diligently discharge the obligations and duties of every relation : behave towards all with truth, righteousness, and fidelity : and each one in his respective station, and according to his ability, endeavour to be useful, and to promote the happiness of all about him. And once more :

That, with respect to ourselves, we carefully subdue every sordid passion : regulate and govern the affections of our hearts : preserve and maintain the dominion of reason and conscience : cultivate the dispositions and habits of piety, virtue, and charity : and in all things, and under every temptation, preserve the purity, dignity, and consistency of  
our



our character, as rational, conscious, and immortal beings.

This is a general view of what our character as the servants of God includes in it. By a steady regard to these important obligations and duties, we act up to the design of our being: consult the dignity and happiness of our nature: and fulfill the work and service to which God has appointed us.

Who then is the good and faithful servant? Not he who barely knows these things: or in speculation acknowledgeth their importance and excellency. Nor he who carefully abounds in any one part of this service, to the neglect of the rest. Nor he who meanly gives way to difficulties and temptations to desert or transgress it. Much less he, whatever be his faith or profession, who lives in the disregard of these obligations and duties; to the dishonour of the God that made him; to the injury of his fellow-servants; to the reproach of his own soul. These most certainly have no claim to this character: nor any ground to hope for the reward annexed to it. These shall at last be rejected with, I know you not; de-

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part

part from me. And be doomed to the punishment of the wicked and slothful servant.

The good and faithful servant is he, who, ever mindful of his obligations to God, sincerely and carefully fulfills them ; and makes his will, the constant rule of his conduct. Under the governing influence of benevolence and love, he lives with a view to others ; and unfeignedly desires and endeavours to contribute to the happiness of all around him. The various talents and abilities which God has given him, he considers as a trust committed to him ; and wisely improves them to the purposes of piety and charity. In the station assigned him by providence, he endeavours to fill up his place with honour and usefulness ; and to be a blessing to all about him. In the relations he bears in life, it is his concern to promote the honour of God ; and to discharge every duty with fidelity, diligence, and love. His time, his health, his capacities, all the endowments of nature, all the gifts of Providence, all the blessings of the Gospel, he receives with thankful acknowledgments to the great Author of all ; and values and improves to the glory of God, to the benefit of others, and to the advancement of pious, holy, benevolent,

volent, heavenly dispositions and habits in his own temper and life. In every part of his character, his care is to preserve a consistency; and to follow the dictates of conscience and of duty. In every part of conduct, he keeps his rule and end in view; and endeavours to approve himself to God, and his own heart. When temptations arise to infringe and violate the sacred engagements he is under, he bravely repels them. In cases of a competition, or when any sordid passion or interest interferes with the duty and service which he owes to God, he admits no debate; he determines on the side of God and duty; and makes no hesitation to sacrifice whatever is inconsistent herewith. And, finally, having engaged in the service of God, he makes it the great business of his life: and therein conscientiously and steadily perseveres, till discharged by his great Master; and called by him to give up his last account.

This is the good and faithful servant. And whatever care it may call for, however difficult it may be, to acquire and preserve this character, yet we want not all needful encouragement. The service itself is excellent and honourable: and our fidelity is rewarded  
by



by the satisfaction and approbation of our own hearts. Whatever service we may be called to, whatever trials and difficulties it may be attended with, the God whom we serve is able and ready to assist us, and to carry us through all. But the greatest and most animating encouragement of all is, that view which the Gospel sets before us, of the glorious recompence of diligence, fidelity, and perseverance : and of the tremendous punishment of the wicked and slothful servant.

True it is, that in this state of frailty and temptation, the best and most faithful servant will have humbling conviction of many imperfections and defects attending him. Under these the Gospel is the most effectual relief : and assures sincerity and fidelity of a merciful and gracious acceptance.

No less true it is, that after all our most successful efforts, and tho' we had done all that was required of us, still we should be unprofitable servants ; should have done no more than was our duty ; and could not, by merit, claim any, much less the immense reward of eternal life. How then can we do this, when in so many things we all of us fail

fail and offend? But here too the Gospel raises and confirms our most lively and enlarged hopes; by assuring us, that the applauses of the great day, and the honour and felicity of eternal life, are annexed to faithfulness and perseverance; and shall be graciously conferred by the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Indulge me yet a little further upon this head. My thoughts, and the present occasion, lead me to set before you the good and faithful servant, in the character and station of a minister of Christ, and the Gospel.

A servant of God in the Gospel of his Son, he professes himself. An important trust he takes upon himself: the Gospel, and the care of immortal souls, is committed to his charge. To be faithful, is his great aim and endeavour. Furnished for his work by his own labours and the grace of God, he enters upon it, with a full conviction of its difficulty and importance; but in firm dependance upon his gracious Master. And how doth he discharge his trust?

With

With himself he begins: sensible how much his acceptance with God, and the success of all his labours, depends upon it. To see the importance and excellency of religion and the Gospel; to feel its power and influence on his own heart; to have his own temper, spirit, and views, under its governing direction; and his whole life and conduct formed and modelled upon the plan of its precepts, examples, and motives: this is his first and great aim: for this he prays, and watches, and labours, not as a christian only, but as a minister also. For, my brethren, without this, how cold and jejune will all our ministrations be? With what little life and energy will they be attended? How shall we defeat our own avowed intention? And after we have preached to others, be ourselves cast away?

In his private retirements, if you could follow him there, you would be witness to his prayers for himself and those committed to his care: to his diligent study of the word of God: to his earnest application to bring out of his treasury what may be for the benefit of his hearers: and to his endeavour to make all his painful labours subservient to the great  
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end which he has in view, the honour of religion, and the salvation of souls.

In his family, or more public connections, he endeavours to maintain a consistency of character : to avoid every thing which would reproach or lessen religion : to preach by a steady and amiable example : and where prudence admits, or the occasion requires, to improve the opportunity of doing good to their souls with whom he converses.

In his work and office as a minister, he considers himself as a steward of the mysteries of God ; as one who watches for souls, and must give an account : and endeavours to behave so, that he may give it with joy, and not with grief.

In his dispensing the truths and doctrines of religion, he acts not as a lord over God's heritage : nor as having dominion over the faith and consciences of others. But with meekness instructs : with sound reasoning convinces : teaches the truth in love : and with zeal and integrity declares the whole council of God relating to men's eternal salvation.

Sinners

Sinners he reproves with firmness and honesty ; he exhorts with long-suffering and gentleness : he warns with plainness and earnestness : knowing how to make a difference ; on some to have compassion ; and others to save with fear, plucking them as brands out of the burning.

The thoughtless and inconsiderate he faithfully warns of temptations and dangers : endeavours to rouse them by the terrors of the Lord : and to exhort them earnestly and daily, lest they should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

The weak and the wavering he aims to confirm, by the most plain and awakening representations of the reality and importance of religion : and by setting before them, with all his force and energy, the awful powers of the world to come,

The mourning humble christian he endeavours to encourage and comfort, by the most engaging representations of the love of God, of the grace of the Redeemer, and of the reviving promises and assurances of the covenant of grace and mercy.

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The duties and obligations of christians, he will plainly represent in all their various branches : inculcate by every sacred motive : and constantly preach that they who believe in Christ Jesus be careful to maintain good works.

The privileges and promises of the gospel he will also set forth in all their greatness and extent, in all their truth and certainty : to administer consolation to those who need it : and to animate all to constancy and perseverance in the work of the Lord.

Nor will he through a false delicacy and tenderness, hold back the terrors of the Lord : but faithfully denounce these to guard against obstinate impenitence ; and to warn men to flee from the wrath to come.

The cause of true christianity he will endeavour bravely to maintain : to defend it, against the assaults of open enemies ; and to detect the subtle arts of those who lie in wait to deceive the weak and unwary.

In all his ministrations, he seeks not to please men, but God ; not to win popular applause,



plause, but the approbation of his great master and his own conscience : not to amuse and entertain, but to do good : not to preach himself or to promote a worldly interest, but to preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and himself a servant of souls for Jesus sake.

Many difficulties attend the faithful and diligent discharge of his duty. Much labour and watchfulness it calls for. Discouragements he expects, and meets with. The denial of himself in many things pleasing and agreeable, appears necessary. And all his circumspection and prudence, he oft finds too little. O who is sufficient for these things? But, persuaded of the goodness of his cause, actuated by zeal and love, animated by his master's example, and warmed by the principles and views of the gospel, he labours still more abundantly ; he willingly spends, and is spent for souls ; and none of these things move him ; neither counteth he his life dear to himself so that he might finish his course with joy, and faithfully fulfil the ministry, discharge the trust, which he has received of the Lord Jesus.

It is not a fictitious character which I have been describing. It is what every minister of Jesus ought to aim at. I speak to myself; and to every one here, who sustains that sacred office. I speak to our hearts and consciences. If you, my friends, have known such in real life, you will value and honour their memory. And you will also learn hence, what to allow, what to expect in those who minister to you; to wit, that plain and honest freedom, that serious affectionate earnestness, which faithfulness to your souls, and fidelity to their great Master, require, oblige them to. Proceed we now,

II. To represent to you the honour and reward annexed to this character.

It is beyond all dispute, that our Lord here carries our views to the great day of judgment.—When he, in the name, and by the authority of the supreme God and Father of all, shall call all to an account, and render to every one, as his works have been. Think now, what an honour will it be to receive from him, public acknowledgments of his approbation and esteem? to be owned and ap-  
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plauded

plauded by him upon his throne of glory, and before the grand convention of angels and men? *Well done good and faithful servant.* Bravely hast thou acted. Faithfully hast thou acquitted thyself. Receive my applause. And let all the world be witness to it. Can you conceive of an honour to be compared to this? With what transports will the soul receive it? conscious humility disclaiming all merit: while angels shall resound the joyful well done; and shout the praises of him whom the judge delights to honour.

Nor is it only an applause: but this attended with a sentence, including the most consummate honour and bliss; beyond all that the heart can conceive. A sentence which heaven itself will ratify; and eternity make good. *Thou hast been faithful in a few things, in the trust committed to thee on earth; and having proved and found thee so, I will make thee ruler over many things: I will prefer thee to my heavenly kingdom, and advance thee to glory and felicity there. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Share with me the honours and entertainments of that heavenly kingdom. And what are these?



these? *That*, only the enjoyment of them, can fully declare. Sacred scripture has described the reward of the good and faithful servant in such terms, as to give us the most exalted ideas of it. It is pure and unmixed. It is perfect and complete. It is immutable and everlasting. A crown of righteousness, of life, and of glory: an everlasting kingdom, that can never be shaken: an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading: being with holy angels; with Christ Jesus; with God himself the fountain of perfection and bliss: and being so for ever: these, and other such like, are the accounts which the word of God has given us of the future glory and bliss of the good and faithful servant. Oh! what joy is this? It is beyond conception! And should I attempt to describe, I should certainly depreciate it! Of this there are different degrees. For as there is one glory of the sun; and another glory of the moon; and another glory of the stars; and one star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead. Every good and faithful servant shall be completely happy: not indeed in the same degree: but each one according to his capacity; and in proportion to his fidelity, diligence,

gence, and usefulness here. Though the least shall not envy the greatest. Nor these despise them. But all rejoice together; and unite in admiring grateful acknowledgments of the unmerited grace of God.

In what rank of glory and happiness, will the faithful, laborious, useful minister of Christ and the Gospel then stand? Not barely the name will then avail him. If he has neglected the duties of his office, if he has acted beneath his character, it will expose him to deeper infamy and misery. But if he here honour his character and office, by a becoming temper and conduct; if he here, for the sake of his usefulness, deny himself; and in the cultivation and exercise of his talents, devote himself to the glory of God, and the salvation of souls; if he here, nobly despising sensual gratifications, and secular honours and profits, honestly and faithfully devote himself to the discharge of his trust, his honours in the great day shall be illustrious indeed. The souls saved by him shall be *his glory and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the presence, and at the coming of the Lord Jesus.* And great, transcendently  
great

great shall his reward be in heaven. *They that are wise to win souls, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever ; yea, as the sun in the kingdom of their father.*

This subject leads us to many useful reflections.

1<sup>st</sup>, The great importance and value of the Gospel is obvious from what has been said.

It is to this, we are indebted for our most glorious and animating prospects ; for our most powerful incitements to a life of piety, virtue, and usefulness. Reason indeed points out a future state : and gives encouragement to *hope*, that sincere piety and virtue, fidelity and diligence, will be rewarded. But was reason our only guide, doubts would still remain ; and demerit and guilt suggest many an alarming fear. Where reason drops it, revelation takes up the important subject : carries us into it with light and assurance : represents it in all its importance and dignity, with a convincing evidence : and dis-



closes some things, which the heart of man could never have conceived of. Could it ever be imagined, that our honest, but feeble attempts to serve God, should, with all this condescension, be openly attested and applauded, by the great Judge, in his resplendent glory? Or that it should be distinguished by a reward, so infinitely surpassing not only all merit, but all hope? It could not. This we owe entirely to the Gospel. For this then we are bound to bless God now. And if animated by these views, we obtain the great reward, we shall admire and praise this distinguished grace to all eternity.

2dly, What good christian need be afraid of death?

To nature indeed it is terrible. But religion and the gospel have stripped it of its terrour : and placed it in the most friendly view. It is the finishing our work and warfare. It is the end of all trials of our fidelity and constancy. It is a discharge from all our labours and hazards. It is the return of our great Lord, to acknowledge his faithful servants ; to applaud them before the whole world ;

world; and to receive them into everlasting glory and felicity. For though this interesting event should not take place immediately upon our leaving this world, yet it remains as fixt and settled, as secure from doubt and hazard, as though it were to commence the very next moment. *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

3dly, Who would lament the removal of a good and faithful servant of Christ, from this scene of labour, sorrow, and trial?

You will reply upon me, who would *not* lament it? When persons well qualified for usefulness, persons of true worth and excellence; of piety, integrity, and benevolence; who devoted their time and talents to the service of their fellow-creatures in their best interests; when such as these are removed, it is a loss to their friends, to society, to the church of Christ. And it would be stupid and unmanly not to grieve. In this view I grant it would.—And upon such an occasion, am ready to mingle my tears with yours. Here indeed, it becomes us submissively to

adore the hand of Providence : and to take comfort that the interests of religion, and the gospel, and the care of souls, are in the hands of the chief shepherd. And there is one circumstance that reconciles us to the removal of those by death who have been able, honest and useful : and that is, when they have almost outlived their abilities for service : and survive not to *live*, but only to *breathe*.

Upon their own accounts however we cannot in any circumstances, or at any time of life, lament their removal. Can we grudge or mourn their discharge from service, trials, and sufferings ? from the labours and hazards of this mortal state ? Can we pine at their being called to reap the fruit of their labours ? at their being safe in the hands, and happy in the presence of the Lord of death, and the invisible world ? whom here they loved and served ; and who will keep that which they have committed to him to the great day. Or that there they now rest in full and joyful expectation of the great applauding day, and of the glories of an everlasting kingdom ? Is this, christians, a subject for grief and lamentation ? O blessed Gospel which  
gives



gives us such solid comfort with respect to those whom living we loved, and whose memories when they are dead, we value and honour!

Were we indeed to leave them in the grave without the hope of a revival; and to consider all their work and service as there buried with them and forgotten for ever, this would be truly melancholy and distressing! But—*Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord: for they not only rest from their labours, but their works follow them.*

Under this consolation, his friends; and you of this church, will the better bear what I have to say to you of your deceased pastor, the reverend Dr. *Benson*. I am sensible how difficult a part I have before me. Respect is due to the memory of one, who was a zealous advocate for the christian cause against unbelievers; a steady defender of christian liberty against all imposition upon conscience: honest to the trust which God and you committed to him: who devoted his time, his health, I might say his life, to study, defend, and explain, the sacred scriptures; and who made it his great care to exemplify

emphly the spirit and laws of the religion he professed, in his temper and conduct. Respect is surely due to such a one. My small tribute I shall pay, not meaning to offend the living, or flatter the dead.

He was born at *Great Salkeld* in *Cumberland*: and descended of very pious parents: who had a numerous family: and the blessing of their growing up to be remarkably good christians. Of all these, our friend was the last survivor.

He was very early mark'd out for the ministry, by his seriousness of spirit, and love of learning; which was so strong, that at eleven years of age, as I am informed, he was able to read the *Greek* testament.

After finishing his grammar learning, he went to an academy kept by Dr. *Dixon* at *Whitehaven*: from whence, after a short stay, he removed to *Glasgow*; and there compleated his academical studies.

These finished, he came to *London*. The worthy Dr. *Calamy* was his great friend; and kindly took him into his family for a time.  
This

This he oft mentioned with respect and gratitude.

By the Doctor's recommendation he went to *Abington*. His abode there was but short. He removed from thence to a congregation in *Southwark* (to whose love for their minister, while they subsisted as a church, I having had experience of it, can bear my testimony), where he laboured with great diligence for eleven years; till called (I think in 1739) to the pastoral care of this church.

A most worthy and esteemed colleague\* he had, when he first settled among you. Who still lives in honour and great usefulness, tho' retired from public life: and who still devotes his abilities and great learning to the most truly valuable purposes. Upon his retiring from public labours on account of bodily infirmities, the whole care of this church devolved upon *Dr. Benson*. And so continued, till his own decays led you to chuse him some further assistance, from my worthy brother who now succeeds him.

Some time after his settling among you, one of the universities in *North Britain* paid

\* The Rev. Dr. *Lardner*.

him



him the respect due to his worth and learning, in conferring upon him, without his seeking it, their highest degree. This was an honour to him, when considered as a testimony of the esteem, in which he was held by men of learning.

These circumstances I should scarce have mentioned : but that every thing relative to a friend, whose memory we esteem, becomes, more or less, interesting to us.

His temper was grave and solid : but far from morose and churlish. His conversation generally turned to one or other part of sacred scripture. He would oft-times enliven it with an agreeable chearfulness. But the byass of his mind, and his close thought and study, rendered him for the most part indifferent to those amusements, which others are too fond of, and devote too much of their time to.

What his conduct and behaviour were, how holily and unblameably he lived, I may appeal to all that knew him ; to those especially who knew him best. He was indeed an ensample to the flock of those virtues and good works which he preached and inculcated :

cated : and shewed that he expected no honour from God or man, on account of any imagined sacredness of character, without a life and conduct correspondent to it. Here indeed he was so unblemished, and his life so even, that calumny is silent, and suspicion can find no place.

His close application to study, his pains and labour, were beyond most : more especially devoting himself to the study of the holy scriptures. This was his element ; his great delight. Witness his writings upon many parts of the New Testament. And perhaps the world may have still further proof of it, in a work which has long employed his thoughts ; and which, I suppose, he has left prepared for the press. And indeed, by his great assiduity he seems to have impaired his constitution ; and to have worn himself out.

Of his ability and zeal in the defence of our common christianity, he has also given proof in a much-esteemed book : wherein he has stated its evidence ; pleaded its cause ; and considered and confuted the objections of a very subtle adversary to it.

Of

Of his zeal against popery he has also given a specimen, in his dissertation on *St. Paul's Man of Sin*. The design of which is to show, that popery is the evil there foretold and described: and its tendency, to raise a detestation of it; and to confirm the protestant cause.

He was a Protestant Dissenter upon the firmest principles, to wit, the sole authority of Christ as head of the church; the sufficiency of scripture; and the right of private judgment. These he ever asserted: these he held sacred and inviolable. And what he claimed for himself, he willingly allowed to others. His regard to the dissenting interest he has testified in his last will: by which he has left 100*l.* to the fund for ministers and students, and the same sum to that for widows and orphans.

His honesty and integrity, in what he thought right, were tried and unquestionable. I believe no earthly consideration could have tempted him to speak or act contrary to the dictates of his judgment and conscience; or to what he apprehended to be the will of God.

On



On account of some sentiments in points disputed among christians, he has been by some hardly censured ; partly perhaps from misapprehension. I am not going to declare for or against them. I will even suppose he might be mistaken. He never thought himself infallible. No man is so. But this I must in justice say, that no man appeared to have a more sincere love to truth, or took more pains to find it out, than he. It is a mistaken zeal, which leads christians to condemn one another, for different sentiments. To his own Master, each one of us stands, or falls. Thank God we do : and not to one another's fallible hasty judgment. If, for a mistaken judgment, an honest man, and a warm advocate for Christ and the Gospel, is to be condemned, who then can be saved? I own I am pleased with the thought, that good men of widely different sentiments shall meet at last in heaven : that all bickerings and contentions, which prevailed on earth, shall cease for ever there : and all embrace, and all unite in perfect love and harmony, to adore and praise Him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb that was slain for them all.

His

His usual method of preaching was critically to explain the scripture, and then to inculcate duty. This he thought was the right method. This he did with a plain and honest freedom. This some might call dry and tedious : while others would be instructed and edified hereby. And indeed (let me observe) as it shews the wisdom of Providence, that there are various dispositions and tastes amongst men, so it shows the care of the Head of the christian church, that his ministers should be so differently furnished, as that the whole flock may have that food dispensed to them which is most suited, if I may so say, to their mental constitution ; to their growth in knowledge, piety, faith, and goodness.

It is certainly a privilege, and what a good christian would wish, when unfit for usefulness and enjoyment, if it pleased God, to be discharged out of life. How many do we see live a burthen to themselves, and a grief to their friends ? And instead of former life, spirit, agreeableness, and usefulness, nothing left, but the shadow of what they were ! bitter remembrancers of former worth ! and sorrowful monuments of human frailty !  
These

These are awful and affecting providences ! Such was likely to have been the lot of our deceased friend ! Those about him mourned over him from this apprehension ! But it pleased God to grant him this favour, to discharge him from the burthens of life by a calm and easy death, and to call him to rest and peace, just when the services and enjoyments of life were at an end ; and all remaining was weakness and sorrow, through bodily decays.

But however, in the latter part of life, his activity and enjoyments were over, yet there were no inward misgivings, nothing wrong, and what was left was hope and comfort. "I am in good hands: all will be well," were words he spoke to a friend, just before he finished his public labours among you. And but a few hours before he breathed his last, a long and intimate friend perceiving as he thought, some small remains of hearing and understanding, said to him, "God will be with you. He hath said it, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Upon which he lifted up his hands, just opened his eyes, as though feeling and enjoying what was said; closed

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them again ; dropped into an easy slumber ; and awoke no more.

Accept this tribute to the memory of an honest man and christian ; my friend ; and your faithful minister in Christ. Remember his instructions and warnings : follow his example : and be at peace among yourselves. May the chief shepherd preside over you. May the labours of my worthy brother whom you have chosen to the pastoral office, be greatly prospered. And in your further choice, may you be guided by a spirit of wisdom and love.

In a little while, my brethren, our great Lord will return. And we must all both ministers and people, be called to give an account. Shall I now, as before God, seriously ask myself and you, what account we are able to give? Tremble we not at the doom of the wicked and slothful servant? *Cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Have we no ambition to obtain the honour and reward of the good and faithful servant? What pleasure doth the applause of a faithful conscience

science give us? How do our hearts feel a delightful glow to be approved of the wise and good on earth? But what are these to the *well done*, of the judge of the world, in all his glory, and in the presence of his father and all his holy angels? and to the honour and bliss subsequent upon it?

Anticipate then to yourselves this glorious solemn day. O what are all the fatigues and difficulties which we meet with here in the service of God, when considered in this light? What if, for our integrity and fidelity, we meet with censures and reproaches? submit to self-denial? give up some emoluments? is not the immense honour and reward of the great day, and of eternity, a most abundant compensation! May that be your's and mine! And when we come to stand before the last tribunal, and to give up the great account, may the judge from his throne applaud us, saying, *Well done, good and faithful servants: ye have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things: enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*

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**I**T is with the sincerest concern, my christian friends, that I now address you upon one of the most awful and frequent occasions in the world,—the removal of a fellow-creature into eternity. And when I see so many spectators assembled round this house of silence, I cannot help supposing you to be influenced by the most serious sentiments of piety and humanity, and not invited merely by curiosity and wonder: for what miracle is it that man who is born of a woman should die, and that the son of man who is like the flower of the field should vanish away? This is but the course of nature—the punishment of sin—and the execution of a sentence which was pass'd above five thousand years ago: it is but a debt which he who speaks to you must soon



soon discharge, and you who hear me quickly pay. Marvel not at this : for behold, I will tell you of greater things than these : verily, verily I say unto you, the days are coming, when the innumerable multitude, on whose ashes we now stand, shall rise out of their silent beds ; nay, when all that are in their graves shall come forth ; those that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Animated by this glorious hope, we now commit to the grave all that is mortal of our friend and brother ; there to rest till the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall arise. After a life of unwearied study and application, he has gained an honourable dismissal ; and his warfare being now accomplished, he has only to rejoice in the testimony of a good conscience, and to wait for his reward from the great Captain of our salvation.

But while we are thankful for his gain, we cannot be altogether insensible of our own loss. There are few of us who do not feel some regret upon this occasion ; and most of us, I dare say, are tenderly concerned at it, in one

respect or another. Some have been deprived of a valuable acquaintance, some of a beloved relation, some of a learned friend, and, what is of greater moment still, the world has lost an honest man.

As a minister of the Gospel of Christ, he studied the scriptures with indefatigable attention, and explained them with freedom and impartiality. As a friend, he always exercised to others what he expected from them, a generous plainness and freedom, void of all dissimulation and hypocrisy. He understood many languages : he conversed only in one, and that was the language of his heart. While he was candid to the opinions of others, he was steadfast in his own ; for he entertained no sentiments which did not cost him a long and conscientious examination. As a preacher, he preferred those points in which all christians agree, before those in which they all differ ; and instead of urging matters of doubtful disputation, he enforced the grand duties of practical religion, as being of absolute and eternal importance. Yet there was no duty he ever inculcated so strongly as that which he preaches to us this moment, " To remember " we are frail and dying creatures."

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His unblameable ministry secured to him the friendship and esteem of his people for many years ; and in this affection he thought himself singularly rewarded for his labours. But his lot had been happy beyond the fate of mortals, if he had not had his share with the wife and good of all ages, in the censure and persecution of the world. He was once judged by persons who have prejudices and passions : he is now judged by that Being who has none ; who sees the inward intention, and regards only the heart.

On account of his zeal for the rights of conscience, and the sacrifice he made of his health and life to the study of truth, he might almost be said to die a martyr to it ; but this did not move him ; nor did he count any thing dear to him, so that he might but finish his course with joy : or if he felt any regret, it was that he had but one life to give to his Lord and Saviour, and that he could not spend his days over again in the same cause.

The infirmities of nature coming fast upon him, he resigned, though with reluctance, his public labours ; and retreated with reputation



from the vineyard in which he had distinguished himself as a good and faithful servant.

He intended to devote the remainder of his days to a peaceful retirement ; in which his greatest felicity would have been the enjoyment of his friends, and the calm contemplation of that eternity upon which he was preparing to embark : but the rapid manner in which he declined, denied us his conversation in the evening of life ; and after a very short cessation from his toils, he went to repose.

Yet happy was his lot in this respect, that he did not linger on the bed of sickness under tormenting pains : he was not bereft of those faculties which he had exerted for the benefit of mankind : he did not live to doubt the power of that religion, which he had so zealously defended, or to despair of the Goodness of that Being, to whose service he had dedicated himself from his earliest youth : but in peace and composure he resigned his spirit into the hands of Him who gave it.

But it is not my intention to make encomiums upon the deceased. Let us rather consider what useful reflections we may draw from

from this solemn event. Let his brethren in the ministry be induced to become more active and vigorous in the discharge of their duty, and to shine in their humble stations with more purity and lustre ; for they know not how soon their lamp may be extinguished. Let his friends and relations sorrow ; but not as those that are without hope ; for he who raised up Jesus from the dead, will raise up those who sleep in him. Let his church and people, to whom he opened the scriptures, and explained the words of eternal life, remember to practice his instructions, that they may meet him with joy at the judgment seat of Christ. Let every unconcerned spectator learn to reverence religion, by seeing the undissembled respect that is paid to the memory of a good man.

And all ye busy race of men, who think yourselves happy, because your sentence is respited till to-morrow ; steal one moment from the world, to reflect that you are mortal. Remember that after all your pains, and weariness, and ambition, this is the period of your labours, and here is the place where you must either rest in peace, or perish in oblivion.

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If this was the final extinction of our being, where all thought and memory were buried in everlasting forgetfulness, it would be a melancholy separation indeed : we should have reason to look upon the grave with horror, and to cry out, “ O God, why hast thou “ made man ! ” But when I consider how many evils and afflictions, from which death happily delivers us, and how many millions it has taken away, whom neither wisdom, nor strength, nor beauty, could save ; when I hear a voice from heaven, saying, “ Blessed are the “ dead that die in the Lord ; ” when I look back, and recollect how many just and excellent spirits, who were once the delight and ornament of human kind, are now gone to their everlasting mansions — I rejoice that I am mortal too. Hail, thou king of terrors ! Welcome, thou victorious grave ! Go, finish your conquest over this child of sin and sorrow : You shall reign a while ; but, ere long, you shall be subdued, and we shall be triumphant. Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, thou good and upright minister, farewell ! we shall soon follow thee : — Yes — we shall soon follow thee, to that place where  
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the weary are at rest. In the mean time, accept these our last honours and respects: they are all we can pay thee: and whatever was excellent in thy character, or amiable in thy life, may we love and imitate it, that our latter end may be like thine.

Which of us shall next be conducted to this silent habitation, God only knows: but certainly it becomes us so to pass the time of our sojourning here, that we may not be ashamed to live, nor afraid to die. Let us ask ourselves, upon what errand we came into the world? where we are travelling to? and what we expect will be our eternal state?

These are the best reflections we can make on the death of our friend; and if they kindle one heavenly affection in our bosoms, if they inspire us with one virtuous resolution to live like christians and candidates for immortality, then he has not died, nor have I spoke, in vain.



THE END.

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